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It didn't do the greatest job.



Jon Fingas, @jonfingas
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AP Photo/Richard Drew

AT&T is facing quite the pushback over its decision to label its upgraded LTE network as "5G Evolution," and not just from rival carriers (yes, including Engadget parent Verizon) taking cheap shots at a competitor. However, it's determined to stick by its decision. In an interview with *Tom's Guide*, the company's Igal Elbaz defended the decision. AT&T had been "pretty public" about what it was doing for some time, he said, and the indicator helps them know they're in an "enhanced experience" coverage area. He added that all of the provider's relevant hardware investment was "5G ready," so it just had to flick a software switch to enable the new technology on its end once both the code and devices were available.

The problem, as you might imagine, is that AT&T isn't really addressing the main concerns. Yes, its souped-up LTE network can be significantly faster and could be worth pointing out, but the issue isn't whether or not there's an indicator -- it's that it's billed as 5G. Unlike when the carrier marketed HSPA+ as 4G, there isn't even the slightest change in standards. The technology is just the amalgamation of multiple performance-boosting methods for LTE, and selling it as 5G is both inaccurate and potentially confusing to people who might incorrectly believe they have 5G-capable phones.

And while it'll be relatively easy for AT&T to make real 5G available on its side, that won't change the practical reality for customers who'll have to replace their devices. There's a concern they'll buy LTE phones now without realizing that proper 5G hardware is just around the corner. While 5G Evolution isn't likely to spend much time in the spotlight, it could lead to some disappointed users.

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Source: Tom's Guide

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